

## Wilford Hall to collaborate on new development center at Brooks

The Air Force will open the Development Center for Operational Medicine, or DCOM, at Brooks Air Force Base and Wilford Hall will be one of several medical facilities in the area to participate in the program. The first of its kind in the Air Force, the DCOM will focus on integrated civilian and military health promotion, casualty prevention and care, disaster response, and agile medical support.

During a press conference at Brooks last week, Congressman Ciro D. Rodriguez explained the need for the new center. "The greatest national security threats facing the United States are not from traditional military forces," he said. "Instead, our troops and citizens at home and abroad face increasing threats from terrorists, weapons of mass destruction, and the aftermath from insurgencies. The DCOM seeks to develop and test new and rapid ways to respond to these growing threats."



*Col. (Dr.) David Schall, 59 MDW/CV; Col. (Dr.) Rasa Silenas, 59 MDW/MRRSD; and Mr. Brendan Godfrey, 311HSW/CV (l-r); participated in a press conference held at Brooks AFB last week concerning the new DCOM. The center will improve disaster response and coordination, develop new rapid response skills, and improve the operation of the Air Force's mobile medical teams.*

The DCOM, scheduled to open by early-August, will be a training center for military and civilian medical personnel from the United States and allies around the world. The center will collaborate with the University of Texas Health Science Center, Brooke Army Medical Center, Wilford Hall, and the Air Force School of Aerospace Medicine.

The center will provide the resources and synergy for research and technology transfer both to and from the government. "San Antonio offers a rich environment for this exchange," said Rodriguez. "The center will foster partnerships to prepare for civil and military responses to unconventional nuclear, biological and chemical threats, as well as devastating natural disaster."

Heading up the center will be our own Col. (Dr.) Rasa Silenas, Chief of Contingency Planning. Silenas will PCA to Brooks in late-July to lead a six-person team of hand-picked experts. The DCOM staff is expected to increase to about 24 personnel over the next year.

"We're manning the center with personnel carefully chosen for their clinical backgrounds and field experience," Silenas explained. "We want to establish a credible relationship between the DCOM staff and front line personnel."

Silenas expects there will be a very close relationship between the DCOM and Wilford Hall. "The Wilford Hall staff has valuable knowledge and experience in medical training and humanitarian efforts that can only enhance the center's mission," she added.